

**ROUND 3 INTERVIEW
NOVEMBER 13, 2021**

JHONATTAN VEGAS (-6)



Q. Can you just take us through 16 and the bounce-back on 17?

JHONATTAN VEGAS: Sixteen has never been a fun hole, for sure. I don't think I've ever birdied that hole at least the last year, this year. It's always been an uncomfortable tee shot, I mean second shot. I like drawing the ball. I usually get a downhill lie, which favors a fade. It's never felt comfortable.

I was trying to hit a hard 4-iron, obviously hit it heavy into the water. Disappointing. I hit it in the water yesterday, hit it in the water today. It's just not a comfortable hole for me and just got to try to put it behind the best way you can and move on.

Q. What did you do at 17?

JHONATTAN VEGAS: So, 17, like I say, it was a little tricky today because obviously you could go for it and all of that stuff. I just decided, hey, there's still a lot of golf to be played, let's give ourselves a chance and gave myself a 15-footer or so and it was a great putt, especially to put that hole behind. Obviously that's going to be a pivotal hole tomorrow and hopefully we can turn it around and use some positive energy and make something happen there.

Q. Not to look too far ahead, but what would it mean to win the Houston Open?

JHONATTAN VEGAS: It would be huge, absolutely huge. Lots of friends, lots of family around here. The city has embraced me ever since I came from Venezuela. It would be amazing to kind of share like a home title with everyone here in Houston. Like I said, it will be up there with if not the biggest win for me.

Q. Could you speak a little to the course conditions today? I know it was kind of stuff on some people out there. What was maybe different about it today?

JHONATTAN VEGAS: You know what, this course, just doesn't sound like it has anything to it, but it's just tricky. It's kind of one of those courses where it's really hard to get the ball close to the holes. Obviously it's a brand new golf course still, conditions are probably not as good as we probably would have liked, but it's still a phenomenal playable golf course. Obviously the rain didn't help at the beginning of the week, but it's a course that as it grows, it's going to be a super exciting course on Tour.

Q. After the first round, co-leaders were at minus 5. Looked like this might be one of those tournaments where minus 20 might win it. What's making everything play a little

tougher?

JHONATTAN VEGAS: Like I said, these greens are hard. I think whoever designed it did a phenomenal job on making these greens hard. Like I said, especially just to get the ball close to it. Sometimes you hit it to 20, 30 feet and it's a really good shot.

So knowing that you can't really get too aggressive and too excited and fire at every pin. You kind of have to take your time on the course and try to put a good round together and that's what you saw. Especially not playing the ball up obviously made it harder today because playing on bermuda, chipping in Bermuda is really difficult, especially on new grass. So you can tell that it's just playing hard.

Q. You mentioned yesterday about the greens, you've got to really putt well, but if you're off the greens and to chip it, it's tough to get the chip out here, isn't it?

JHONATTAN VEGAS: If you look at the greens, they have a lot of movement, a lot of slope. Chipping up some of these big slopes and it's really hard to put spin on the ball. Usually spin's your friend, but not here. When it comes down to that, like I said, with the movement these greens have, it's just really hard to chip it close. Missing the green, you're going to have to fight really hard to make par.

Q. You got a good round in you for tomorrow?

JHONATTAN VEGAS: I hope so. Obviously I'm feeling well, sleeping well in my bed, so should be a fun one.

Q. What's the biggest memory from the first Houston Open back when you were 18?

JHONATTAN VEGAS: Oh, my God, probably the biggest memory I have as a Tour player, I remember just walking into that locker room and seeing all the guys there. I remember Vijay, Freddie, Phil. I mean, you name it were playing that week. As an 18-year-old just to be there and kind of feeling that, seeing those guys and kind of feeling that energy of a lot of those guys playing on Tour and they were at their best, it just really made me super excited about golf. So obviously that's my first Tour event. It would be cool to have a great week and win it here.